

Inside Labor

State Dept. Keeps Eye on Reuthers

By VICTOR RIESEL



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There are those in the State Dept. who, between gulps of aspirin, are wondering what the brothers Reuther will do next.

For some time now, Walter, the elder, has had his own "foreign office," run by a continent-hopping "foreign minister," Victor, the younger.

Unlike any other foreign offices, its service has no money problem.

Last year it spent \$577,000.

This still left about \$3.8 million in reserve, which easily will grow to \$6 million in a year or so, because its source is the annual interest on the union's mammoth strike fund.

For almost two years now the Reuther brothers have been welding a powerful global labor machine — and are about ready to launch it across world frontiers.

The unveiling is scheduled for the first week in June in the auto union's Detroit headquarters known as Solidarity House.

There's nothing rusty about Walter Reuther except the color of his hair.

When he moves, he moves big, and so does his brother Victor, head of his union's International Affairs Dept. Their newest global operation, virtually unknown to the public, covers six continents.

By any name, it would be influential among peoples and governments led more and more by Laborites.

The new venture will be called the World Wide Automobile Council — a continent-spanning union, the first of its kind, with branches in at least 50 countries.

The major council will have four sub-councils — one each to cover all the GM plants across the earth all the Ford installations; all the Chrysler - Fiat-Simca - Rootes production centers; and a miscellaneous board for such foreign manufacturers as Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz.

The mother council probably will be headquartered in Switzerland, where it can be close to something called the International Metalworkers Federation — a vast coalition of workers who handle any product with metal in it, ranging from

It will all be quite ceremo-

niously launched in Detroit on or after May 31. Some 40 auto union leaders from plants as far off as Australia will gather with the brothers Reuther to plan their future — and some of the planning will be open to the public media—printed and electronic.

The objective will be eventual confrontation of each of the auto companies by one solid international council of unionists.

Thus Reuthers auto union in the U.S. can throw its support to unions of GM employees in Germany, Venezuela, or Australia — to which the Reuthers last year dispatched some of their colleagues and specialists.

This merely is one phase of the operations of the United Auto Workers' international dept. At this moment it is training some 50 of its people as global or transcontinental organizers.

As soon as these men have completed their foreign service training here in Washington and Detroit, they will be replaced by others until the cadres grow by the hundreds, according to Victor Reuther's plans.

Thus from Nairobi or Addis Ababa to Canberra and Caracas, there will be auto union men working with local unions — in and out of the auto manufacturing industry.

The work will stretch right through the Orient to Tokyo and South Korea—with plenty of stop-over in South Viet Nam.

What intrigues the U.S. State Dept. is the impact of the auto union's "little State Dept." on American foreign policy in this burgeoning era when the labor leader of yesterday often is the prime minister of tomorrow.

Victor Reuther, frequently a brilliant, ingenious opponent of the forces in the AFL-CIO national headquarters, rarely hides his distaste for America's foreign policy.

Victor is intensely opposed to U.S. action in Viet Nam.

He hardly is one of NATO's enthusiastic champions.

And recently he led a delegation of U.S. citizens to the Dominican Republic to observe whether there would be "fair elections." He and his group demanded assurances that the U.S. armed forces and CIA sides.